

Aramaic Targum to Ruth

תרגום ארמי

merged

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This file contains merged sections from the following text versions:

-Samson H. Levey, Hebrew Union College, 1934

-<http://targum.info/meg/ruth.htm>

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Chapter 1

It came to pass in the days of the Judge of Judges that there was a great famine in the Land of Israel. Ten great famines were decreed by Heaven to be upon the earth, from the day on which the world was created until the coming of the King-Messiah, to admonish therewith the inhabitants of the earth. The first famine was in the days of Adam. The second famine was in the days of Lemech. The third was in the days of Abraham. The fourth famine was in the days of Isaac. The fifth famine was in the days of Jacob. The sixth famine was in the days of Boaz, who is known as Ivzan the Pious of Beth Lehem of Judah. The seventh famine was in the days of David, the king of Israel. The eighth famine was in the days of Elijah the prophet. The ninth famine was in the days of Elisha at Samaria. The tenth famine is due to come, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but to hear the word of prophecy from the Lord. And when there was this great famine in the Land of Israel, a nobleman went forth out to Beth Lehem of Judah and went to dwell in the field of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion, Ephrathites, noblemen, of Beth Lehem of Judah; and they came unto the field of Moab, and there they were military tribunes.

Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left a widow, and her two sons were left orphans.

They transgressed the decree of the Word of the Lord and took unto themselves foreign wives, of the daughters of Moab, the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the second was Ruth, the daughter of Eglon the king of Moab, and they dwelt there for a period of about ten years.

And because they transgressed the decree of the Word of the Lord by intermarrying with strange peoples, their days were cut short, and the two of them, Mahlon and Kilion, also died, in an unclean land; and the woman was left bereft of her two sons and widowed of her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law and returned from the field of Moab, for she was informed by an angel, in the field of Moab, that the Lord had remembered his people, the House of Israel, giving them bread, through the merit of the Judge Ivzan by virtue of the prayer which he prayed before the Lord; he is Boaz the Pious.

She went forth out of the place where she had been, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they were walking on the way to return to the land of Judah.

Said Naomi to her daughters-in-law: "Go, return each to her mother's house. May the Lord do kindness unto you, just as you have done unto your deceased husbands, refusing to marry after their death, and unto me, whom you have provided for and sustained.

"May the Lord reward you fully for the kindness which you have shown to me, and by virtue of that reward may each of you find rest in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

Said they unto her: "We will not return to our people and our gods, but with you will we return to your people, to become proselytes."

Then said Naomi: "Return, O my daughters. Why should you go with me? Do I still have children in my womb that they might be husbands unto you?"

"Return, my daughters, from following me. Go unto your people, for I am too old to be married. Should I say: 'Now, if I were a young woman, having hope, verily! should I be married this very night and should I bear sons,'

"Would you wait for them until they grew up, like a woman who waits for a small brother-in-law to marry her? Because of them would you sit tied down, not marrying? Pray, my daughters, do not grieve me, for I am more embittered than you, because a stroke from the Lord has come forth against me."

Once again they lifted their voices and wept; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung unto her.

Then said she: "Behold, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and to her gods. Return after your sister-in-law to your people and your gods!"

But Ruth said: "Do not coax me to leave you, to turn from following you, for I desire to become a proselyte." Said Naomi: "We are commanded to

keep the Sabbaths and holidays, not to walk more than two thousand

cubits." Said Ruth: "Wheresoever you go I shall go." Said Naomi: "We are commanded not to spend the night together with non-Jews." Said Ruth:

"Wherever you lodge I shall lodge." Said Naomi: "We are commanded to keep six hundred thirteen commandments." Said Ruth: "That which your people keep, that I shall keep, as though they had been my people before this."

Said Naomi: "We are commanded not to worship idolatry." Said Ruth: "Your God is my God."

Said Naomi: "We have four methods of capital punishment for the guilty -- stoning, burning with fire, death by the sword, and hanging upon the

gallows." Said Ruth: "To whatever death you are subject I shall be

subject." Said Naomi: "We have two cemeteries." Said Ruth: "There shall I be buried. And do not continue to speak any further. May the Lord do thus unto me and more if [even] death will separate me from you."

When she saw that she insisted upon going with her, she ceased to dissuade her.

The two of them went until they came to Beth Lehem. And it happened that when they came to Beth Lehem all the inhabitants of the city became excited over them and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

But she said to them: "Do not call me Naomi [pleasant]; call me the

bitter of soul, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me indeed.

"I went away full, with my husband and sons, but the Lord has brought me back destitute of them. Why, then, should you call me Naomi, seeing that my guilt has been testified to before the Lord, and the Almighty has brought evil upon me?"

So Naomi returned, and with her was Ruth, the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who returned from the field of Moab. And they came to Beth Lehem on the eve of the Passover, and on that very day the Israelites began to harvest the Omer of the heave-offering which was of barley.

Chapter 2

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a strong man, mighty in the Law, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

And Ruth, the Moabite, said to Naomi: "Let me go now into the field and gather among the ears of grain after him in whose eyes I may find favor." She said to her, "Go, my daughter."

So she departed and went up and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and she chanced upon the part of the field that belonged to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

And behold! Boaz came from Beth Lehem, and he said to the reapers: "The Word of the Lord be at your assistance!" They replied, "The Lord bless you!"

Then said Boaz to his servant whom he had appointed overseer of the reapers: "Of what nation is this young woman?"

The servant who was appointed overseer of the reapers answered thus: "She is a young woman of the people of Moab who returned with Naomi from the field of Moab, and has become a proselyte.

"She said, 'Please let me gather and glean the ears of grain among the sheaves, that which is left by the reapers.' So she came and has remained since early morning even until now. It is but a short while that she is sitting in the house a little."

Then said Boaz to Ruth: "Will you not listen to me, my daughter? Do not go to gather grain in any other field, nor leave this place to go to another nation, but continue here with my young women.

"Mark the field that they will reap, and follow them. Have I not charged the servants not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink the water which the servants have drawn."

Then she fell on her face and bowed to the ground, saying to him: "Why have I found favor in your eyes that you should befriend me, seeing that I am of a strange people, of the daughters of Moab; of a people which has not the merit to intermarry with the congregation of the Lord?"

Boaz replied thus: "It has been told to me on the authority of the sages, that when the Lord decreed [against intermarriage with Moab], He did not decree against the women, but against the men. Through prophecy I have been informed that kings and prophets are destined to descend from you, because of the kindness which you have shown your mother-in-law, in that you supported her after your husband died, and you left your gods and your people, your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have gone to become a proselyte and to dwell in the midst of a people with whom you were unacquainted before.

"May the Lord reward you well in this world for your good work, and may you receive full recompense from the Lord, the God of Israel, in the world to come, because you have come to be a proselyte and to seek shelter under the shadow of His Glorious Presence. Through that merit you will be saved from the punishment of Gehinom, so that your portion will be with Sarah and Rebecca and Rachel and Leah."

Then she said: "May I find favor with you, my lord. Verily, you have comforted me by declaring me eligible to join the congregation of the Lord and you have spoken comfortingly to your maidservant by assuring me of possessing the world to come, like a righteous woman, although I have not the merit of having a portion in the world to come even with the least of your maidservants."

At mealtime Boaz said to her: "Come here and eat of the bread, and dip your food in the broth cooked in vinegar." So she sat down beside the reapers, and he handed her some roasted meal. She ate and was satisfied and left some over.

When she arose to gather ears of grain, Boaz commanded his servants: "Let her gather even among the sheaves, and do not put her to shame.

"Indeed, drop some of the bunches, and leave them for her to glean, and do not reprimand her."

So she gathered ears of grain in the field until evening, then she threshed the ears of grain that she had gathered, and the amount was about three seah of barley.

She carried it and went up to the city, where her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. Then she took out of the bag the food which she had left over after being satisfied, and gave it to her.

And her mother-in-law said to her: "Where did you glean today? Where did you win favor to work? May the man who showed himself friendly to you be blessed." And she told her mother-in-law with whom she had won the favor

to work. "The name of the man with whom I won favor today is Boaz," she said.

Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law: "Blessed be he by the holy mouth of the Lord, who has not withheld his kindness from the living or the dead. The man is a relative of ours," she continued. "He is of our redeemers."

"Verily!" said Ruth the Moabitess, "he also said to me, 'Continue with my servants as long as it takes them to finish all my harvests.'"

Then said Naomi to Ruth her daughter-in-law: "It is well, my daughter, that you should go out with his young women, so that they might not meet you in any other field."

So she joined up with the maidservants of Boaz, reaping until the completion of the harvest of barley and the harvest of wheat. And she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Chapter 3

Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her: "My daughter, I swear that I shall not rest until I have found comfort for you, that it might be well with you.

"Now, does not Boaz, our kinsman, with whose maidservants you were in the field, winnow barley at the threshing floor in the night breeze?

"Bathe yourself with water, anoint yourself with perfumes, and put on adornments; then go down to the threshing floor, but do not reveal your presence to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

"When he lies down to sleep, however, mark the place where he sleeps; then go in, uncover his feet, and lie down yourself. Then ask advice of him, and in his wisdom he will tell you what to do."

And she responded: "I will do everything that you have told me."

So she went down to the threshing floor, and did just as her mother-in-law had instructed her.

When Boaz had eaten and drunk and felt merry, he blessed the name of the Lord, who had accepted his prayer, in that he removed the famine from the Land of Israel. Then he went to lie down by the side of the grain-heap, and Ruth came secretly, uncovered his feet, and lay down to sleep.

And it happened at midnight that the man shuddered and trembled, and, as a result, his flesh became as soft as a [boiled] turnip. Though he perceived a woman sleeping at his feet, he subdued his evil inclination and did not draw nigh unto her, just like the righteous Joseph, who refused to draw nigh unto the Egyptian woman, the wife of his master; and just like the pious Paltiel, the son of Laish, who placed a sword between himself and Michal, the daughter of Saul and wife of David, refusing to approach her.

"Who are you?" said he. She responded, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Let your name be called over your maidservant, by taking me to wife, inasmuch as you are a redeemer."

Said he: "Blessed be you before the Lord, my daughter. The last good deed which you have done is better than the first. The first was that you became a proselyte, and the last, that you made yourself like a woman who waits for a small brother-in-law until he grows up, refraining from following young men, whether poor or wealthy, in order to carry on immoral relations with them.

"And now, my daughter, do not fear. What you say to me I will do for you, since it is known to all who sit at the gate, the Great Sanhedrin, of my people, that you are a righteous woman and have the strength to bear the yoke of the commandments of the Lord.

"Now, in truth, I am a redeemer, but there is also another redeemer who is better qualified to redeem than am I.

"Lodge here, and in the morning, if the man qualified to redeem you according to the Torah redeems you, very well, let him redeem you. But if

he is unwilling to redeem you, then I will redeem you. I swear by an oath before God, that I will do just as I have spoken to you. Sleep now until the morning."

So she slept at his feet until morning. At dawn, before one could recognize another because of the darkness, she arose. Then he said to his servants: "Let it not be known to anyone that a woman came to the threshing floor."

[To Ruth he said:] "Take the scarf which you have there, and lay hold of it," he said. So she took hold of it. Then he measured six seah of barley and placed it upon her, whereupon strength to carry it was given to her from God. At that moment it was announced through the medium of prophecy, that six of the most righteous men were destined to descend from her, each one of whom would be blessed with six blessings -- David, Daniel and his companions, and the King-Messiah. Then Boaz went into the city. She came to her mother-in-law at daybreak, and Naomi said to her: "Who are you? My daughter?" Then she told her everything that the man had done. He had acted on instructions revealed to him through the medium of prophecy.

"The man gave me these six seah of barley," said she, "Saying to me: 'You must not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"

Then Naomi said: "Abide with me at home, my daughter, until you find out how it is decreed by God and how the matter is decided, for the man will not rest unless he complete the matter satisfactorily today."

Chapter 4

Boaz went up to the gate, the Beth Din of the Sanhedrin, and sat there with the elders, when lo, the redeemer of whom Boaz had spoken to Ruth passed by. "Come over," said he, "and sit down here, you, whose ways are secret." So he turned aside and sat down.

Then he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said to them: "Sit down here." And they sat down.

Then he said to the redeemer: "Naomi, who has returned from the field of Moab, is selling the land inherited by our brother, Elimelech.

"So I thought I would tell you about it saying, 'Buy it in the presence of those sitting at the gate, the Beth Din of the Sanhedrin, and in the presence of the elders of my people.' If you are willing to redeem it, do so; but if you are unwilling, tell me, so that I may know, inasmuch as there is no one who is entitled to redeem before you, and who is as close a relative as you are, as far as buying is concerned. Let me know, then, that I may be the redeemer after you." "I will redeem it," said he.

Thereupon Boaz said: "When you buy the field from Naomi you are also obligated to redeem from Ruth, the Moabitess, the widow of the dead, and you are required to marry her, in order to establish the name of the deceased over his possession."

The redeemer replied: "In that case, I cannot redeem it; because I have a wife, I am not permitted to take another one in addition to her, lest the result be quarrel in my home, and I will be destroying my own possession. You redeem it, since you have no wife; for I am unable to do so."

Now the following custom was practiced in Israel in ancient times: When they would carry on business transactions, redeem, and exchange with one another, one would take off his right glove and give it to the other, thereby handing over the right of possession. In this manner the House of Israel was accustomed to make transactions with one another binding, in the presence of witnesses.

When the redeemer said to Boaz, "Put forth your hand for the act of acquisition, and buy it yourself," Boaz took off his glove and made the purchase.

Then Boaz said to the elders and to all the people: "Be my witnesses today that I have bought from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and to Mahlon and Kilion.

"Also Ruth, the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, have I acquired to be my wife, in order to set up the name of the deceased over his possession, that the name of the dead may not be destroyed from among his brothers, and from the gate, the Sanhedrin, of his place. You are my witnesses today."

Then all the people who were at the gate, the Sanhedrin, and the elders, replied: "We are witnesses. God grant that this woman who comes to your home, be like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the house of Israel, our father, with twelve tribes. Do valiantly in Ephrath, and become famous in Beth Lehem.

"And from the offspring which the Lord will give you by this young woman, may your house prosper like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he had intercourse with her, and God gave her conception, so that she bore a son.

Then the women said to Naomi: "Blessed be the name of the Lord, who has not left you without a redeemer today. May the boy's name be among the righteous of Israel.

"He will be life-sustenance to you and provide your old age with delights; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, she, who during your widowhood was better to you than many sons, gave birth to him."

So Naomi took the boy and put him in her bosom, and was his nurse.

And the women of the neighborhood named him, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" They called his name Oved. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron.

Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Aminadab.

Aminadab begot Nahshon, who was the head of the household of the tribe of Judah, and Nahshon begot Salma the righteous. He is the Salma of Beth Lehem of Judah, and Netophah, whose sons abolished the guards which the wicked Jeroboam had set over the highways. They served their father, and were becoming children, like balm.

Salmon begot the judge, Ivzan, who is identical with the righteous Boaz, because of whose merit the Israelite people were saved from their enemies, and because of whose prayer the famine ceased in the Land of Israel. Boaz begot Oved, who served the Master of the Universe with perfect heart.

Now Oved begot Jesse, who was called Nahash, because no corruption and perversion, for which he might be delivered into the hands of the angel of death, who would take his life from him, were found in him. He lived a long time, until the serpent's counsel to Eve, Adam's wife, to partake of the fruit of the tree, the eating of which resulted in wisdom to distinguish between good and evil, was recalled before God. Because of that counsel, all inhabitants of the earth are mortal, and as a result of that blunder, the righteous Jesse died. He is Jesse, who was the father of David, the king of Israel.